

LEGENDS 166

Chapter 166: Liga NOS is Back I

****3rd June 2020****

****7:25 pm****

The Porto team bus drove into the grounds of the Estadio Municipal de Junho, arriving for the scheduled match.

It had been about three months since the Liga NOS was suspended due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, but today, the league was going to be resuming its matches.

The stadiums wouldn't be able to have fans and everyone could only watch the matches from within the safety of their homes, which was an unfortunate outcome both for the players and the fans, but at this point, everyone was just glad that Primeira Liga football was resuming.

The players got off the bus and entered inside the stadium grounds, heading for their locker rooms.

Each one of them was dressed smartly in dark blue New Balance tracksuits and they all had nose masks on their faces.

The players of the Porto team were led towards a locker room where half of them entered to get changed and ready for the warm-up while the other half of the players were led to another locker room where they would do the same as the first group.

This was done as a way to avoid overcrowding of the players, and it was a part of the safety regulations added due to the COVID-19 virus.

The players didn't waste any time dawdling around and quickly changed into the training kits that they would use for the warm-up and headed out to the green.

Everything that needed to be addressed regarding the game plan and the line-up had already been discussed by the manager earlier in the day back at their own training grounds, after which they had headed out.

The players walked through the interior of the stadium and headed to the green, some of them waving and making all sorts of gestures at the camera being pointed at them by the cameramen while the rest ignored the cameras.

Jason headed out with an air of seriousness around him, though he still smiled at the cameras whenever he came face to face with the camera, otherwise, he just ignored the cameras and stayed impassive, doing some mental psyching up to improve his mentality in preparation for the match.

On reaching the field, the players began their warm-up routines with the aid of the equipment that had been arranged on the field, each team taking one-half of the field.

The warm-up exercises didn't take too long and the players soon headed back to their respective locker rooms to make their final preparations for the match.

Sergo Conceicao had ended up not making a single change to the first choice of the line-up of players he had picked for the new formation and the line-up consisted of,

Diogo Costa in between the sticks,

Alex Telles and Tomas Esteves play as the left back and the right back respectively,

Pepe and Diogo Leite were playing as the two center backs,

Mamadou Loum was playing as the defensive midfielder,

Shoya Nakajima and Otavio were both playing as center attacking midfielders, but Otavio would drop back every so often to function as a center midfielder which made it easier for them to exchange the ball among themselves,

Jason was playing as the left winger, while Fabio Viera was playing as the right winger,

Ze Luis was the only striker.

A lot of the major names in the team were left out as they had not been deemed to be match fit and the manager had decided to not play them.

It had also helped that the training for the new formation went exceptionally well and they were as effective as the manager wanted them to be, so he had decided to go ahead with his risky decision.

By 9:05 pm, the players of both teams began marching out into the stadium and doing their pre-match formalities, exchanging, elbow touches instead of handshakes.

The silence in the stadium at this point was very unusual, but the players didn't have the luxury to care.

Finally...

Fweeeeeeeeeee

The referee's whistle blew for the start of the match at exactly 9:15 pm, bringing the three-month break of Primera Liga football to an end with that singular whistle sound.

The Familicao team passed first and quickly began exchanging the ball among themselves, doing their best to keep possession of the ball for the first few moments of the game.

They did not want to allow the Porto team to steal the ball from them and build off that momentum, but the Porto players didn't care about their opinions or thoughts and rushed at them with vigor in their every step.

Soon, the Familicao's passing lanes began to be cut off one by one due to them being taken by surprise and being unprepared for the change in the Porto team's formation.

It was well known that the Porto team usually played in the 4-4-2 formation so a huge amount of their match preparation had focused on how to deal with the Porto team's formation, thus they were unprepared for the change and were unable to respond quickly to the press from Shoya and Otavio.

They couldn't even try passing back as an option because the three forwards were always shadowing the defenders of the Familicao team always waiting to intercept the ball should it come their way.

Soon, the inevitable happened and the Familicao team lost the ball to the Porto team, and they immediately pulled back and got on the defensive.

The Porto team immediately took control of the midfield and started exchanging the ball smoothly among themselves, while Jason, Fabio, and Ze Luis took turns running at the Familicao box, teasing them every so often with a run behind the defense.

In the 9th minute of the game, the Porto team was once again in possession and were passing the ball around in the final third, just outside the Familicao 18-yard box.

Jason suddenly moved towards Shoya and asked for the ball to feet.

Shoya wasted no time in sending the ball his way and Jason trapped the ball with his feet and turned towards the Familicao box, immediately shooting a look at Fabio, but not moving for a second.

After seemingly surveying his surroundings, Jason pushed the ball forward and seemed about to run at the defenders like he so often did, but then all of a sudden he swung his leg and sent a chip pass over the defender that was coming at him.

The ball flew into the Familicao penalty box and Fabio Viera suddenly appeared behind his marker on the right side of the field, charging for the ball.

The Familicao defenders and their goalkeeper moved, all intent on stopping the ball from reaching Fabio Viera, but thanks to his head start, he reached the ball first, but unlike what the Familicao players were expecting the ball, he didn't volley the ball at the goal.

He instead opted to catch the ball with the side of his right foot and send it across the face of the goal and out of the reach of the keeper's gloves.

Before the ball completely rolled across the face of the goal, Ze Luis appeared from behind one of the Familicao team's center backs and poked the ball with his feet, sending the ball into the back of the net.